



## STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR  
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
CHARLES J. KROGMEIER, DIRECTOR

To: Legislators  
Fr: Molly Kottmeyer, Department of Human Services  
Re: Update on DHS projects #5-Food Assistance  
Date: August 3, 2009

The Food Assistance Program raises nutrition levels for low-income Iowans and also benefits retail and agricultural economies. Benefits are funded 100 percent with federal dollars. The cost of administering the program is shared 50-50 with the federal government.

Iowans who are interested in applying for Food Assistance may do so at the local DHS office or online at [www.oasis.iowa.gov](http://www.oasis.iowa.gov). The Online Application for State of Iowa Services (OASIS), released in June 2009, may be used to apply for Food Assistance, Medical Assistance, Cash Assistance (Family Investment Program), and Child Care Assistance.

Food Assistance eligibility and benefits are based on federal rules that consider the number of people who live and eat together, their income, resources and household expenses. Expenses considered include child care costs, child support paid, a portion of shelter costs (rent, utilities, telephone), and medical expenses of elderly or disabled household members. Food Assistance recipients must also be a U.S. citizen or a legal immigrant.

In June, 303,429 Iowans received food assistance benefits, an 18.2% increase from June 2008. As of June 2009, almost 80% of Iowans eligible for food assistance are receiving benefits. In addition, over 80% of Iowans receiving Food Assistance also receive Family Investment Program or Medical Assistance. Attached is a county-by-county breakout of the number of recipients.

This increase in caseloads, along with operating a Disaster Food Assistance program in 2008, has created challenges in accurately delivering benefits. The federal government determines a program error rate for states each year. Iowa's error rate for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008 was 8.01%, which is determined by adding total overpayments and underpayments. The national average for FFY 2008 was 5.01%.

A state's error rate can exceed the national average without a federal financial penalty if the state is within a federal tolerance level. States are penalized if they are over both the national average and the tolerance level for two consecutive years. Iowa exceeded both the national average and tolerance level for FFY 2008. In an effort to avoid a second consecutive year and potential penalty, DHS is taking a number of steps to reduce errors for FFY 2009. These steps include:

- Use of the Kaizen methodology (week-long event held May 2008) to analyze the Food Assistance program application process and focus on reducing errors in cases with earned income.
- Simplifying Food Assistance policies and aligning the policies with other DHS assistance programs.

- Standardizing and improving processes with an emphasis on using technology to create efficiencies for caseworkers.
- Recent implementation of a statewide Customer Service Center (CSC). This allows recipients to report changes to a single location. CSC uses a standard process to act on reported changes.
- Creation of an error analysis committee. Policy staff, quality control staff and field staff review potential error cases. This allows all staff to have a common understanding of what types of errors are occurring. Lessons learned are used to avoid future errors.

The average household benefit was \$278 a month in June 2009. This benefit amount is higher than last year because the Federal Government, in April 2009, increased the average benefit level by about \$45 a month as part of the stimulus package. The \$38.6 million issuance for June 2009 equaled a 49.9% increase compared to June 2008.

The US Department of Agriculture estimates that every \$5 spent on food generates \$9.20 in local and state economic activity. Food Assistance recipients spent about \$38.4 million with certified FNS retailers, including farmers' markets, in June 2009. This created about \$70.7 million of economic activity for Iowa in June alone.

Iowa's EBT Wireless Project leads the country in providing access for EBT households at farmers' markets. Iowa's Project is unique in that DHS provides wireless technology to individual farmers. Other states use one wireless device per market and sell tokens or scrip. Customers take the tokens to the farmers, who then turn the tokens into the market manager and wait to be reimbursed. In this type of situation, the only time the farmer benefits is when they go to the particular market that has a wireless device. Iowa's model allows the farmers to take their wireless device to any market where they sell, any roadside stand, or any on-the-farm or u-pick operation and sell their products. Iowa farmers receive reimbursement for their sales within two business days.

The Wireless Project, now in its fifth summer, provides Iowa farmers with wireless technology that enables them to accept EBT cards and debit and credit cards. Approximately 160 farmers participate in the Wireless Project. Out of approximately 180 farmers' markets in Iowa, there is EBT access at 119 markets. Farmers are responsible for the transaction fees related to a commercial debit/credit card.

	<b>2007 Calendar Year</b>	<b>2008 Calendar Year</b>	<b>2009 (YTD thru 6/30/09)</b>
<b>Total Sales (commercial &amp; EBT)</b>	\$516,290	\$724,703	\$331,017
<b>EBT only Sales</b>	\$39,733	\$41,845	\$14,016
<b>Total Transactions</b>	21,458	27,701	9550
<b>EBT Transactions</b>	4,457	4,257	1,306 *

\* The majority of EBT sales/transactions occur July-September of each year.

Sales in 2009 continue to outpace those of 2008. As of the end of June 2009, total sales were \$331,017 compared to \$264,995 at this time last year, an increase of 25%.

Year To Date Comparisons (6-30-09)	2008	2009	Rate of Change
Total Sales	\$264,995	\$331,017	+25%
EBT Sales	\$7,397	\$14,016	+89.5%
Total Transactions	7,173	9,550	+33%
EBT Transactions	687	1,306	+90%

## Food Stamp Participation by Case Type and County

County	FIP Program			Food Assistance Only			Other Programs			TOTAL			PARTICIPATION RATE*
	Households		Recipients	Households		Recipients	Households		Recipients	Households		Recipients	
	Households	Recipients	Affidavit	Households	Recipients	Affidavit	Households	Recipients	Affidavit	Households	Recipients	Affidavit	
<b>Area 1 - Sioux City</b>													
Buena Vista	128	435	57,223	178	217	30,335	478	1,329	148,901	784	1,981	236,459	63.0%
Cherokee	34	101	12,668	49	65	8,329	208	542	56,516	291	708	77,513	46.9%
Clay	280	40,398	191	255	34,289	453	1,034	119,371	739	1,559	194,058	68.0%	
Dickinson	50	152	20,040	124	145	19,650	279	639	70,014	453	936	109,704	53.7%
Emmet	45	154	23,113	78	112	15,067	247	675	75,778	370	941	113,958	72.8%
Ida	11	35	4,990	39	52	7,718	153	410	45,754	203	497	56,462	45.0%
Kossuth	61	188	25,812	121	152	20,733	248	660	70,902	430	1,000	117,447	38.0%
Lyon	23	74	10,726	34	60	7,921	136	379	38,022	193	513	56,869	35.0%
O'Brien	61	177	25,473	89	133	15,428	251	659	69,648	401	969	110,549	59.1%
Osceola	8	24	4,230	23	33	4,269	88	234	24,198	119	291	32,697	33.6%
Palo Alto	29	78	10,868	74	100	11,969	170	424	43,449	273	602	66,286	39.2%
Plymouth	35	100	13,939	79	105	13,175	341	1,007	112,100	455	1,212	139,214	49.4%
Sibley	40	102	15,044	75	103	12,598	264	827	75,759	379	972	110,401	31.3%
Woodbury	567	1,766	251,331	1,482	1,965	283,639	3,719	9,807	1,158,552	5,788	13,558	1,694,522	83.7%
<b>Area Total</b>	1,187	3,666	515,856	2,636	3,497	485,120	7,035	18,566	2,116,964	10,858	25,729	3,117,939	62.8%
<b>Area 2 - Waterloo</b>													
Black Hawk	950	2,747	378,466	2,212	2,623	388,775	4,230	9,882	1,151,383	7,392	15,252	1,918,624	70.4%
Bremer	33	85	11,925	156	214	26,616	258	742	76,461	447	1,041	115,002	60.2%
Butler	46	151	19,388	100	138	16,362	243	672	69,186	389	961	104,936	51.9%
Cerro Gordo	186	530	76,385	1,086	1,371	188,788	1,261	3,220	376,904	2,537	5,121	642,677	82.9%
Chickasaw	31	94	14,206	78	109	13,160	197	525	56,021	306	728	83,387	48.2%
Floyd	66	214	27,310	169	259	33,374	437	1,170	129,344	632	1,643	190,928	65.8%
Franklin	35	103	14,469	68	82	8,994	210	622	68,439	313	807	91,902	58.0%
Grundy	19	50	7,050	56	76	9,422	123	325	35,491	198	451	51,963	40.8%
Hancock	38	115	16,792	70	115	14,798	191	519	54,732	299	749	86,323	57.9%
Mitchell	12	43	5,663	52	83	8,890	121	321	34,460	185	447	49,013	28.3%
Winneshiek	31	91	12,218	104	155	21,026	224	651	73,407	359	887	106,651	66.0%
Worth	22	72	10,177	72	107	13,370	116	297	32,650	210	476	56,197	43.2%
<b>Area Total</b>	1,463	4,295	594,049	4,253	5,332	743,576	7,611	18,946	2,158,478	13,327	28,573	3,495,103	66.0%
<b>Area 3 - Dubuque</b>													
Allamakee	55	165	23,358	141	198	27,465	378	935	112,280	574	1,298	163,103	60.1%
Buchanan	62	194	26,799	145	187	23,161	393	1,024	114,644	600	1,405	164,604	46.9%
Clayton	44	128	18,157	97	138	16,475	317	807	85,135	458	1,073	118,767	41.0%
Clinton	378	1,154	162,714	1,125	1,388	201,368	1,803	4,273	494,545	3,306	6,815	858,627	93.0%
Delaware	85	236	32,942	158	195	26,821	364	952	108,696	607	1,383	168,458	59.4%
Dubuque	550	1,701	239,192	1,210	1,481	208,482	2,087	5,205	618,527	3,827	8,387	1,068,201	80.4%
Fayette	118	372	47,591	270	360	47,927	570	1,434	152,529	958	2,165	248,947	62.0%
Howard	37	118	15,589	72	87	11,428	188	495	55,813	297	700	82,828	51.9%
Jackson	94	312	40,419	245	341	44,226	519	1,317	142,981	658	1,970	227,626	64.1%
Winneshiek	57	176	25,984	121	152	18,849	317	763	83,305	495	1,091	128,138	48.5%
<b>Area Total</b>	1,486	4,556	632,745	3,584	4,527	626,200	6,916	17,295	1,968,455	11,980	26,288	3,227,400	69.4%

## Food Stamp Participation by Case Type and County

County	FIP Program			Food Assistance Only			Other Programs			TOTAL			PARTICIPATION RATE *
	Households Recipients		Afflignment										
	Households	Recipients	Afflignment										
Area 4 - Ames													
Calhoun	25	72	9,860	84	105	12,232	224	602	61,956	333	779	84,048	49.1%
Hamilton	57	176	25,867	158	233	30,317	368	986	106,929	583	1,395	163,113	91.3%
Hardin	78	263	36,969	195	276	31,782	385	985	106,691	638	1,534	175,442	65.1%
Humboldt	69	201	27,945	114	144	16,789	213	516	50,564	396	861	95,298	69.3%
Jasper	246	739	104,748	474	657	88,203	864	2,195	248,320	1,584	3,591	441,771	104.1%
Marshall	280	837	119,400	593	718	110,492	1,524	3,768	432,194	2,397	5,323	662,086	93.8%
Pocahontas	21	63	9,524	73	91	12,626	191	529	53,951	285	683	76,101	56.4%
Poweshiek	102	326	47,347	155	230	29,478	384	854	94,286	621	1,410	171,121	58.9%
Story	277	815	119,324	952	1,173	179,496	1,245	3,195	403,348	2,474	5,184	702,168	40.0%
Tama	71	241	32,139	162	262	33,270	377	1,016	113,764	610	1,519	179,173	56.1%
Webster	260	802	111,187	581	747	102,738	1,336	3,317	381,584	2,177	4,866	595,609	87.3%
Wright	81	242	34,158	125	172	21,279	308	821	86,219	514	1,235	141,656	69.3%
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>1,567</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>678,468</b>	<b>3,666</b>	<b>4,808</b>	<b>668,702</b>	<b>7,379</b>	<b>18,795</b>	<b>2,140,416</b>	<b>12,612</b>	<b>28,380</b>	<b>3,487,586</b>	<b>66.8%</b>
Area 5 - Council Bluffs													
Audubon	8	23	3,482	31	38	5,470	108	277	32,320	147	338	41,272	39.2%
Carroll	44	125	19,105	108	130	17,496	426	1,057	121,144	578	1,312	157,745	61.7%
Cass	66	198	27,506	190	251	29,520	406	1,071	114,173	661	1,520	171,199	65.9%
Crawford	121	307	46,613	132	179	42,256	404	1,121	127,905	657	1,607	198,774	59.5%
Fremont	48	145	20,010	85	135	15,291	211	542	58,761	344	822	95,062	73.3%
Greene	35	109	14,899	54	70	9,772	256	714	75,528	345	893	100,289	54.4%
Guthrie	28	105	15,586	59	81	11,700	198	517	60,384	285	703	87,570	47.1%
Harrison	53	173	24,754	184	275	35,639	421	1,065	114,960	658	1,513	175,253	75.9%
Mills	50	157	20,763	120	164	22,168	317	880	100,038	487	1,181	142,959	66.9%
Monona	15	52	6,608	108	153	20,366	247	638	68,698	370	843	95,672	56.8%
Montgomery	74	239	33,004	178	253	34,258	398	1,119	126,962	650	1,611	194,124	93.9%
Page	81	253	35,714	248	351	43,461	485	1,309	143,052	814	1,913	222,227	68.6%
Pottawattamie	677	2,135	300,714	1,265	1,670	248,114	3,284	8,307	1,006,310	5,226	12,112	1,555,138	109.6%
Sac	19	53	6,563	61	78	10,119	178	473	51,857	258	604	68,539	35.6%
Shelby	43	125	15,750	141	186	24,814	270	691	77,549	454	1,002	118,113	68.0%
Taylor	24	71	9,026	50	79	8,876	167	451	45,632	241	592	63,534	45.2%
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>4,270</b>	<b>600,087</b>	<b>3,014</b>	<b>4,084</b>	<b>561,320</b>	<b>7,776</b>	<b>20,212</b>	<b>2,326,173</b>	<b>12,175</b>	<b>28,566</b>	<b>3,487,580</b>	<b>76.1%</b>
Area 6 - Des Moines													
Adair	12	33	4,851	77	110	13,715	166	459	54,216	255	602	72,782	57.2%
Adams	17	63	8,883	21	24	3,843	91	254	28,086	129	341	40,822	44.9%
Benton	114	363	56,162	412	555	76,760	488	1,312	155,220	1,014	2,230	288,142	72.2%
Clarke	46	149	22,343	137	215	30,885	344	825	93,857	527	1,189	147,085	82.1%
Dallas	151	446	66,261	393	549	76,490	789	2,223	267,635	1,333	3,218	410,386	82.6%
Decatur	57	178	24,780	180	231	31,912	385	912	105,640	592	1,321	162,332	66.1%
Lucas	49	161	23,396	126	175	24,289	325	920	105,898	500	1,256	153,583	70.6%
Madison	36	115	15,203	152	220	26,840	217	667	73,766	405	1,002	115,809	66.7%
Marion	119	374	53,715	297	411	56,779	652	1,685	198,599	1,068	2,470	309,993	72.2%
Polk	2,684	8,403	1,216,680	8,767	10,905	1,630,930	11,918	29,255	3,746,652	23,369	48,563	6,054,272	117.1%
Ringgold	22	68	8,333	53	65	7,241	144	372	37,900	219	505	53,474	43.2%
Union	68	196	25,751	252	316	39,840	416	1,112	123,259	736	1,624	188,850	74.1%
Warren	105	305	46,961	342	477	63,079	666	1,882	223,842	1,113	2,644	333,882	82.9%
Wayne	31	110	14,076	86	124	14,169	197	475	56,925	314	709	85,070	52.9%
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>3,511</b>	<b>10,964</b>	<b>1,587,395</b>	<b>11,295</b>	<b>14,377</b>	<b>2,156,772</b>	<b>16,788</b>	<b>42,333</b>	<b>5,271,415</b>	<b>31,574</b>	<b>67,674</b>	<b>9,015,582</b>	<b>99.1%</b>

## Food Stamp Participation by Case Type and County

County	FIP Program		Food Assistance Only		Other Programs		TOTAL		PARTICIPATION RATE *	
	Households	Recipients	Households	Recipients	Households	Recipients	Households	Recipients		
<b>Area 7 - Cedar Rapids</b>										
Appanoose	110	339	45,062	322	51,420	580	1,321	151,183	1,012	
Benton	250	34,584	218	308	42,543	532	1,400	163,888	832	
Davis	172	23,796	53	74	10,621	184	429	46,483	675	
Iowa	144	20,682	104	128	17,391	241	637	71,317	908	
Jefferson	292	42,986	471	535	80,895	488	1,183	136,918	1,058	
Johnson	1,531	215,260	1,814	2,139	338,176	2,087	5,007	641,741	4,383	
Jones	169	23,120	195	271	35,650	392	1,053	117,806	645	
Keokuk	159	22,581	133	165	24,477	297	778	85,261	478	
Linn	2,919	414,465	4,320	5,085	784,121	5,288	12,920	1,580,001	10,562	
Madaska	734	103,290	465	557	86,682	667	1,559	177,940	1,371	
Monroe	121	16,391	102	122	17,477	236	560	61,603	381	
Van Buren	45	19,717	96	137	18,603	183	449	50,685	324	
Wapello	356	148,485	1,021	1,195	179,030	1,771	4,008	479,235	3,148	
Washington	114	363	48,075	250	308	43,006	455	1,208	132,067	819
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>2,713</b>	<b>8,384</b>	<b>1,179,594</b>	<b>9,567</b>	<b>11,410</b>	<b>17,40,094</b>	<b>13,411</b>	<b>32,512</b>	<b>3,895,228</b>	<b>25,691</b>
<b>Area 8 - Davenport</b>										
Cedar	129	18,507	111	143	18,646	277	777	91,312	433	
Des Moines	1,254	172,298	844	1,005	154,995	1,749	4,512	529,486	2,986	
Henry	325	46,505	277	332	47,213	636	1,671	188,050	1,022	
Lee	949	136,281	637	808	115,815	1,364	3,335	389,141	2,316	
Louisa	52	152	21,272	100	131	17,254	307	834	97,109	459
Muscatine	298	956	132,865	614	823	113,655	1,433	442,273	2,346	1,117
Scott	1,391	4,334	603,624	3,835	4,473	737,798	6,136	15,269	1,913,682	11,362
<b>Area Total</b>	<b>2,604</b>	<b>8,098</b>	<b>1,130,352</b>	<b>6,418</b>	<b>7,715</b>	<b>1,205,376</b>	<b>11,902</b>	<b>30,190</b>	<b>3,651,089</b>	<b>20,924</b>
<b>State Total</b>	<b>15,910</b>	<b>49,010</b>	<b>6,918,565</b>	<b>44,433</b>	<b>55,750</b>	<b>8,187,160</b>	<b>78,798</b>	<b>198,669</b>	<b>23,528,228</b>	<b>139,141</b>

\* Participation Rate is the percentage of individuals at or below 130% FPL who are receiving Food Assistance in a given area (County/SA/State). It is calculated by dividing the number of Food Assistance Recipients in an area (county/SA/State) by the number of persons in that area at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level. (As counted in the 2000 Decennial Census)